UNITED STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INSTRUCTION 765-7 Food and Nutrition Service 3101 Park Center Drive

**FNS** 

REV. 2

**ACTION BY: Regional Directors** 

Alexandria, VA 22302

**Special Nutrition Programs** 

SOURCE CITATION: Section 245.8

Handling Lost, Stolen and Misused Meal Tickets

This instruction sets forth policies with respect to <u>needy students</u> who report lost or stolen meal tickets in schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Commodity School or Special Milk Programs. In this instruction the term "ticket" refers to any and all forms of exchange used in the schools or institutions food service collection systems, including daily, weekly, or monthly paper tickets, cards, coins or tokens. It should be noted that, but when handling instances of missing tickets, schools need not actually issue a replacement ticket if appropriate meal arrangements, such as accompanying the student to the cafeteria line, <u>are made</u>.

The State agency may establish a Statewide system for ticket replacements for needy students or may allow school food authorities to establish their own procedures; except that any system which <u>limits</u> the number of tickets reissued must conform to the following standards:

- 1. Parents and students must be advised in writing of the school's policy regarding missing meal tickets and of the students' corresponding responsibility for their tickets. Such notice shall be provided at the time applications are distributed to households or upon approval for free and reduced price benefits.
- 2. A minimum of <u>three</u> ticket replacements, or <u>special meal a arrangements</u> resulting from three lost or stolen tickets must be allowed each student with in each school year.
- 3. The school must maintain a list of students who have reported missing original ticket(s) in the current school year and the number of occurrences for each student. Prior to denying the meal to any student without a ticket, the list should always be reviewed to determine if the student has already had at least three ticket replacements or special meal arrangements for lost or stolen tickets within that school year.
- 4. At least one advance <u>written</u> warning must be given to the student and parent(s) prior to the refusal to allow additional meals or ticket replacements. The written warning

must include an explanation that the student has repeatedly requested replacement tickets and that each subsequent time the student fails to have a ticket, he or she will be expected to either bring lunch or pay full price for lunch.

5. Meals must always be provided to preprimary and young primary students or for any handicapped students who may be unable to take full responsibility for a meal ticket.

Using the above criteria, state agencies or school food authorities may develop the most administratively feasible system to handle missing tickets as determined by individual school circumstances and frequency of ticket issuance. In cases of repeated ticket loss or misuse, school administrators may wish to contact an adult household member to arrange a meeting to discuss the problem.

It is recommended that the meal or ticket replacement policy for missing free and reduced price tickets be extended to the loss of full price tickets. If such a uniform policy covering both needy and non-needy students is not implemented, schools must exercise care to preclude the overt identification of needy students when reissuing free or reduced price to meal tickets or making arrangements to provide meals to students whose tickets are missing.

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